Empowerment or Instrumental Progressivism? Analyzing Information Literacy Policies

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Abstract

This article reports on a qualitative content analysis of a sample of national information literacy policies, whether endorsed by states or professional bodies. It develops a framework for analysis which is attuned to the idea that information literacy can and should be viewed from multiple perspectives; this being the "six frames of information literacy" model developed by Bruce, Edwards, and Lupton. One addition is made to this framework, that being to seek specific reference to collaboration and teamwork in the national policies, whether this means collaboration between learners or between different agencies, who are expected to work together to manifest the benefits of information literacy. This framework is then applied to the sample policies. Half are found to be generally holistic in form, the other half less so. These latter policies risk being what Robins and Webster call "instrumentally progressivist": oriented toward producing learners who can act as information processors but not promoting approaches that lead to a more creative, empowered, socially conscious, and reflective relationship with information.

Introduction

This article reports on a qualitative content analysis of information literacy (IL) policies and statements from a range of countries. Precursors to this article exist in publications such as the review edited by Lau (2007), but that document is interested mainly in activities and resources.[1] Virkus's article (2003) is a wide-ranging review of developments and policies up to the date of publication, but for obvious reasons cannot serve as a review of recent developments in IL.

The specific contribution of this article is that it analyzes the policies using a framework which is attuned to the political consequences of IL (see also Whitworth, 2009, 2010). IL practitioners must recognize that different forms of value come into play when decisions are made about *how* and *why* information is filtered out. Filtering is the fundamental basis for any relationship with information, but this task is not always undertaken by the learner acting as an autonomous agent. The structures of organizations and society, and the form of technological tools, have filtering built into them of which the learner is unlikely to be cognizant unless their critical awareness is raised. In addition, learners are not singular actors but parts of communities. Communities and groups can enhance and improve the process of IL, but also at times retard it, due to parochialism and "group-think" (Janis, 1972). An IL strategy that is unaware of these issues risks becoming what Robins and Webster (1987) call *instrumental progressivism*: a tool for the *dis*empowerment of the learner, rather than one that can help them become flexible, creative, and independent thinkers.

I suggest that Bruce, Edwards, and Lupton's (2007) "six frames of IL" model provides an analytical framework that is in large part attuned to the issues mentioned above. It can therefore counter tendencies for IL to become a tool of instrumental progressivism. However, I will observe that the six frames model does not pay explicit attention to the need for collaboration in information searching (though it is acknowledged that it is implicitly present at some levels). To supplement it, recent work by Andretta (2010) can be drawn upon. She recognizes that learner-information relationships must often involve third parties who may act as tools of the search but can also help the learner refine and reflect on the whole process of retrieving, filtering, and using information. Collaboration between learners and between agencies charged with delivering IL education must therefore be added to the framework.

Once this analytical framework is in place it can be used in the analysis of a sample of national IL policies. As a result of this analysis I conclude that there does exist some IL policy statements that recognize the holistic and variable nature of the field, some of which have achieved a level of state recognition. But even these relatively exemplary policies could still go further in promoting a collaborative, relational perspective on IL.

The Six Frames of Information Literacy

Generally, this study can be justified by reference to principle 4 of the Prague Declaration (2003), which states that:

> Governments should develop strong interdisciplinary programs to promote Information Literacy nationwide as a necessary step in closing the digital divide through the creation of an information literate citizenry, an effective civil society and a competitive workforce.

Immediately, however, there appear tensions and contradictions. The first is located in the opening three words, "Governments should develop. . . ." In fact, no government *directly* develops and delivers educational programs. Though they may direct and promote such developments, the work will be undertaken by others. This is not a trivial point: perceptions of *who should be responsible for IL* vary, and these differences of opinion may block the formation of coherent IL policies, or result in contradictory tendencies within a national or international context. What some of these contradictions are can be partly judged from the final words of the Prague principle. The development of "an information literate citizenry, an effective civil society and a competitive workforce" are different goals, and there may be tensions between them; at best, each term needs more explanation in order to see where commonalities lie. The latter task is undertaken in the next section; the remainder of this section discusses the first possible tension, around perceptions of roles and responsibilities in the formation of IL policy.

As the work of Bruce, Edwards, and Lupton (2007) shows, perceptions of IL vary. As they say, the notion that people see teaching and learning differently is "a deceptively simple proposition, supported by much research" (p. 1), and it is this proposition that drives their six frames model, to be discussed in more detail below. Extrapolating from this notion, it is also justifiable to claim that people see *teachers* and *learners* differently as well.

Different views of learners include the "empty vessel" or "recipient of information" perspective characteristic of behaviorist pedagogies (e.g., Skinner, 1954); constructivism's "active participant," engaged in building their own knowledge structures, scaffolded by the teacher but not dictated by him/her (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978); a member of a community of practice engaged in learning behavioral norms and ways of thinking appropriate in a particular workplace setting (Wenger, 1998); a disempowered subject of political hegemony, maintained through the discourses and environments of education as much as through manipulation of the public sphere (Gramsci, 1971); and so on. Each will give rise to a different view of what it means to be "information literate." Respectively these may range from the need to be an efficient information searcher and filterer; an independent learner; a good communicator and collaborator, engaged in a joint knowledge-manufacturing process; and a critically aware "organic intellectual," challenging received ways of thinking, including their own (e.g., Shor, 1996).

Similarly (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), teachers may be seen merely as the "human face" of a learning environment designed with reference to principles developed "scientifically" and disseminated from the educational research laboratory or field experiment through to the policy- and standards-setting establishment, but without passing through the unpredict-

able, subjective, and parochial hands of teachers on the way. Conversely, teachers may be seen as continuously developing, self-reflective professionals, actively constructing an individual, context-sensitive praxis of education, always questioning basic assumptions, autonomous and forever learning about learning, their own, and their students', each informing developments in the other (Carr & Kemmis).

In practice, of course, these are stereotypes or ideals. They are helpful constructs for thinking, but real teachers and learners do not fall neatly and for all time into one of these categories. Different learning and teaching styles, the affordances of available technology, structural, financial, and personal pressures all combine to leave most real teaching and learning situations as pragmatic constructions, built through a range of compromises and negotiations around what objectives and perspectives are to be *valued* at given places and times (Cervero & Wilson, 1998). This is why the six frames model (Bruce, Edwards, & Lupton, 2007) is not trying to define different frames separately from one another but instead recognizes that a really effective approach to IL education is only manifested when students can "experience variation" (p. 6) in their interaction with information. That means knowing what approaches to IL are appropriate at particular times. The six frames of IL are the *content, competency, learning to learn, personal relevance, social impact,* and *relational* frames. More detailed interpretations of the frames are available in Bruce, Edwards, and Lupton (2007); see also below.

In practice, these different perspectives on IL are not equally valued. Andretta conducted a survey of 157 IL practitioners, asking each to indicate which two of the frames best described the approach to information literacy education adopted by their institutions (2007, 2010, pp. 46–48). One hundred thirty-one of the respondents put the competency frame first or second, and sixty-three the content frame; none cited the social impact frame.

The first research question worth examining, then, is whether this great variation in value also affects how IL is defined at the macro-level (national policy statements) as well as the micro (individual teachers' views). The six frames provide the basic framework for this analysis.

IL: Colonized, or Just Confused?
Different perceptions of the *role* of the teacher also exist at the macro- and micro-level. The best source for this discussion is Carr and Kemmis (1986). In essence, these authors propose that education is characterized by a political struggle between centralizing and decentralizing forces, with notions of authority and professional development the key instruments. Who is granted a *politically legitimate* role in the design of learning environments, and/or their assessment? On what grounds is this legitimacy based?

Robins and Webster (1987, p. 34, cited in Whitworth, 2009a, pp. 125–126) point out that

> the most significant feature of the development of advanced capitalism and the nation state has been their endeavor to integrate diverse areas of life into domains over which they have control. Drawing in and extending into once exempted activities, corporate capitalism and state agencies typically have achieved a greater management of social relationships, have increasingly "scripted" roles and encounters, at the same time as they have advanced their criteria as those most appropriate for conducting affairs. This process should be seen as the rationalization of control in pursuit of particular interests.

Essentially, this is the process that Jürgen Habermas (1984/7) calls *colonization.* (A full exploration of this idea is beyond the scope of this article, but see Whitworth, 2009, pp. 123–126, for an introduction; also see Webster, 2006, pp. 161–202.) Colonization in education has the effect of devaluing the context-specific praxis of individual teachers, with authority and professional status dependent on continuous self-reflection and negotiation, and replacing it with the "objective" pronouncements of educational science and policy science (cf. Fay 1975, pp. 27–28). The autonomous teacher/designer is replaced by the instructional designer; the peer reviewer by the government inspectorate; the mutual recognition of competence and community by the abstract qualification and license to teach (Mezirow, 1990, p. 363).

Robins and Webster (1987, pp. 207–225) call tendencies like these "instrumental progressivism." In the name of student- or pupil-centered education, the teacher is disempowered, but this is not accompanied by the genuine empowerment of the learner. Instead, the learner becomes the focus of a widespread social engineering project designed to turn the education system into a production line contributing to the ongoing production of state capitalism. In other words, education serves the interests of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). I have argued elsewhere (2007, 2009a; see also Reffell & Whitworth, 2002) that models of IL based too strongly on only the content and competency frames are complicit in instrumental progressivism and contribute to the colonization of education and society. Hence, not just the interest, but the *requirement* that information literacy, to meet the objectives outlined in the Prague Declaration (2003) and Alexandria Proclamation (Garner, 2006), be taught and defined in holistic ways that extend beyond the focus on content and competencies.

With information literacy education, questions of legitimacy are further complicated by the significant role played by another professional group, librarians (and other representatives of the information professions). Historically, IL has been "strongly influenced by the idea that it is the province of librarians" (Whitworth, 2009, p. 98). There is no innate reason why this should be so. In the list of "information literacy givens," which open

the Alexandria Proclamation (Garner, 2006, p. 30), the library makes no specific appearance:

> During the Preliminary Meeting of Sector Experts and Regional Team Leaders on Sunday November 5, 2005, the following "givens" were developed in order to maximize the time and effort available during the Colloquium. All participants understood that the "givens" existed and, therefore, did not need to be issues requiring debate during the course of the Colloquium.
>
> • Information Literacy is too important to be left to any one institution, agency or profession; collaboration is essential.
> • Information Literacy needs to be approached within the context of people's cultural values, societal groupings and personal information needs.
> • Information Literacy is more than use of technology.
> • Information Literacy is concerned with empowering people regardless of modes of information access and delivery.
> • Achievement of Information Literacy goals requires flexible strategies to meet the needs of diverse communities and individuals.
> • Information Literacy is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society and is part of the basic human right of lifelong learning.

However, it is the library sector that has largely taken on the role of defining, promoting, and implementing IL education. This also requires attention in the present analysis. *Whose* policies have been adopted or publicized? What connections, if any, have been drawn between state policy-makers, educational researchers, administrators, teachers, librarians and information scientists, parents, learners, and employers (consumers of the products of education systems)?

Diverse objectives among stakeholders can lead to a lack of communication at best, confusion at worst. Other writers have seen this in diverse international contexts. Virkus (2003, no pagination) says:

> Danish information literacy initiators, Skov & Skærbak (2003) also report that discourse analysis reveals that *informationskompetence* (the Danish analogue for information literacy) is "a 'floating signifier', a term open to interpretation, and one that means different things to different people", even among librarians. The term is used mainly in the library sector in Denmark and "has not yet made its way into the vocabulary of the official publications outlining strategies for acquiring the competencies needed in the knowledge society."

De Jager and Nassimbeni (2002), discussing South Africa (see also below) bemoan a "lack of convergence" (p. 127); in Ireland, Russell and O'Brien see "no consensus" (2009, p. 101). Ponjuan (2010) makes the general point that any national IL policy is challenging to implement because very few countries have experience working with the library and information science field as well as educational communities like teachers: the links between these different groups are weak in most places. Conse-

quently, IL is rarely recognized at the highest political level, being "sub-sumed within an 'information society' agenda focusing primarily on the promotion and development of ICT skills and infrastructure" (Russell & O'Brien, 2009, p. 102; see also Whitworth, 2009). Lower down the political hierarchy (Russell & O'Brien, 2009, p. 103):

> Sectoral approaches to IL tend to be dissimilar and specific to their own needs. For example, in health IL may be evidence-based whereas in special libraries a more corporate or strategic approach may apply. Academics tend to be concerned about learning outcomes and pedagogy; while public libraries are more concerned with social inclusion.

This could be viewed in a positive way, as a sign of diversity, which has value in its own right as it facilitates adaptation to changing circumstances (Whitworth 2009a, p. 21), as well as awareness of the personal relevance frame (see below). But fragmentation can also pave the way for colonization: the imposition of meaning from a policy drawn up by a limited range of interests which then, in turn, reduces the range of support available from related structures that are based on the policy (e.g., funding, assessment regimes, legal requirements). These can all converge on a relatively narrow view of IL.

Therefore, to strengthen the framework used in this analysis, it is necessary to account for the importance of collaboration between different stakeholder groups, and more explicitly recognize not just that valuations of the frames vary between groups, but why this variation may itself be problematic. A strong IL policy must explicitly recognize the value of collaboration, and in different ways. In the first place, drawing on personal and professional relationships is a highly effective strategy for improving the effectiveness of information searching. An example of this came with the writing of this very article. The task of finding enough policy documents to make the analysis worthwhile would not have been impossible without the help of colleagues (as explained in the "searching and filtering strategies" section below; and see also the acknowledgments), but it would have taken much longer and, particularly outside the English-speaking world, been both less effective and less efficient as a result. Collaboration between librarians and library users (students or teachers) is also an essential part of the IL process, with the librarians taking on the roles of "information provider" and "information educator" at different points in the relationship (Andretta, 2010).

At the level of policy rather than practice, collaboration and integration of the work not only of librarians but academics, students, and employers is essential if IL is to break out of the stereotypical view of it as "library skills" (see Head & Eisenberg, 2009, pp. 34–35; Thornton, 2010, pp. 364–65). Therefore, it was decided to add collaboration to the list of coding categories for the content analysis, not as a "seventh frame" but as something that can enhance and improve each of the six frames of IL.

METHODOLOGY

The original intention in this article was to focus only on policies that were endorsed at the state level. However, as soon as the literature search began it became apparent that such policies were very few in number. The scope of the review was therefore broadened to include IL frameworks endorsed by professional bodies such as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (ANZIIL), and so on.

The decision was also taken to consider policies at any level of education, from elementary to tertiary, and also in communities, informal learning, and the workplace. I have argued previously (Whitworth, 2009a, pp. 179–193) that a holistic view of IL requires a consideration of how it spans the "classroom walls," and moves between the formal and informal sectors. As much for reasons of difficulties of measurement and definition as anything else (O'Sullivan, 2002, p. 10), employers and their representative associations often do not have clear policies on information literacy, despite their declared interest in it being present in their staff. As Irving and Crawford say (2008, p. 5): "although employers do not explicitly ask for information literacy it is implicitly expected, seen as important work but not included in workplace training. It therefore falls to education to provide future employees with the necessary information literacy skills and competencies." IL is declared as important for economic competitiveness, yet this is not backed up with an awareness of how the economy itself and its component businesses and industry sectors can develop IL skills in its own interest. The burden is placed on universities and schools. However, some policies (such as Scotland's; see below) do address the lifelong learning, workplace, and community sectors.

The six frames of IL were expanded into coding categories show in table 1.

Table 1. Interpretations of the Six Frames

Frame	Coding categories
Content	The importance of information and IL. Drivers of the need for IL. Knowledge of information sources.
Competency	Searching skills, anti-plagiarism, generic evaluation regimes (e.g. ensuring web page has date of publication, etc.)
Learning to learn	Developing metacognitive skills, independent learners.
Personal relevance	Developing awareness of personal (not generic) filtering strategies. Awareness of context-specific applications, multiliteracies.
Social impact	The production of information intended for public use, active citizenship, solving problems.
Relational	Awareness of holistic nature of discipline, need to experience variation, iteration and dynamic definitions. Self-awareness of the process of IL itself.

It is acknowledged that these are interpretations of the six frames, which could be disputed. The frames are not completely separable from each other in any case: some activities will cross over between different frames. However, these particular interpretations have been used before, in a project in which they were intersubjectively validated both by students and expert IL practitioners (Whitworth, McIndoe, & Whitworth, 2010). Content analysis is particularly suitable for testing existing theories (Ezzy, 2002, pp. 84–85) and through revealing the assumptions which underlie any qualitative analysis, the reliability and validity of that analysis is enhanced (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

Added to these was a seventh coding category, highlighting evidence that a policy valued collaboration, whether between individual learners, or between learners/facilitators, or between different professional groups. Were attempts being made to reach an understanding between different groups, to overcome subjective values of the learners or parochial views of the field more generally?

Searching and Filtering Strategies

The principal criteria for selecting source documents were that a document had to:

- had to be written in English[2];
- mention information literacy at some point (as opposed to merely using other terms such as digital literacy, information skills, etc.);
- discuss policy at a *national* context; that is, as opposed to forming policy in a particular university;
- include some kind of discussion of specific standards and practices; that is, being more than a general discussion of the importance of IL;
- have been published after 2003; that is, after the date of Virkus's review.

Scope was also a cogent issue. The project was undertaken specifically for this special journal issue, and despite a desire to secure a comprehensive review, it was known in advance that word count would be limited. The researcher therefore made only two "passes" through the literature, or rather, one pass with two different approaches: first with the aid of colleagues (through a request for help on the LIS-Infoliteracy mailing list); the second by searching the IFLA resources.

This pass brought up eleven candidate documents. Of the initial eleven, two were rejected on the grounds that no English version existed and translations could not be effected in time (Norway, Taiwan) and three on the basis that though they discussed the need for policy in a general sense, they were anticipations of a policy that had not yet been formed (Wales); had not yet been published (Ireland); or was not available for consultation (Cuba). Having removed these five, six documents

remained, used hereafter as representative of policy in the following countries:

- Finland
- United States
- Australia/New Zealand
- Hong Kong
- Scotland
- South Africa

Although a small sample, this is a geographically diverse one, containing representatives from all continents except South America. It also covers two countries in which English is not the first language (Hong Kong and Finland) and one in which there are many official languages (South Africa). It was therefore decided that this was a good balance of national contexts while simultaneously being few enough to be able to keep this article within the required length for the journal. It was therefore decided to end the literature search at this point.

Each is now discussed in turn, with reference to the criteria given in the previous section.

FINLAND

Source Document(s)
The main source is the *Recommendation* (2004). This outlines the objectives and forms of IL education at three levels: Level I (new students); Level II (bachelor's degrees); and Level III (master's degrees). Kakkonen and Virrankoski (2010) provide useful further detail, supplemented also by Tolonen and Toivonen (2006/2010).

Level of Policy
Finland is frequently lauded as the only state that has fully recognized IL in policy. The Alexandria Proclamation (Garner, 2006, p. 6) says: "With the exception of Finland, national policy makers remain largely unaware of information literacy," and the U.S. *21st Century Skills* document (see case 2 below) makes specific reference on page 20 to "the widely lauded 'Finnish model.'" Although the Hong Kong example (see case 4), for one, disproves the argument that Finland is unique in this regard, it confirms that there is state recognition of IL in the country.

However, the development plans for *Education and Research 2003–2008* (Ministry of Education, 2004) and *Education and Research 2007–2012* (Ministry of Education, 2007) make little specific mention of the term IL.

Values Collaboration?
Cooperation between the academic supervisor and the library in delivering IL education is recognized as being of "the utmost importance" at Lev-

els I and II (*Recommendation,* 2004, p. 3). In practice, Kakkonen and Vir-
rankoski (2010) recognize that time is lacking and academic participation
in the collaboration is limited, though this is not strictly a policy issue.

Frames

   Content Frame. At all three levels students need to recognize primary
sources of information in their field and (at Level III) keep this knowledge
under review as the field develops. Referencing standards and practices
are highlighted throughout.

   Competency Frame. Recommendation (2004, p. 2) states: "The objective of
the information literacy curriculum is that graduates from the university
will meet the international information literacy competency standards,"
defined specifically as the ACRL definitions. These are then presented
without further analysis or critique.

   Learning to Learn Frame. It is believed that integration of IL into the
curriculum will "raise the quality of work" and that students "with versa-
tile information competencies speak of the high standard and competi-
tiveness of degrees" (*Recommendation*, 2004, p. 1); page 2 says that "when
leaving the university, the student will have the information competencies
required by professional life and lifelong learning." These phrases could
also be interpreted as originating from the competency frame: if this were
the case the conclusion of this section would in fact be strengthened.

   Personal Relevance Frame. Levels II and III are described in terms of the
learner needing to focus an information search around their own chosen
research topic, but beyond this no reference is made to the idea that IL
competencies and practices may differ between fields of study, as observed
by Kakkonen and Virrankoski (2010, p. 501).

   Social Impact Frame. No mention is made of the use of IL outside the
academic setting.

   Relational Frame. No mention is made of variation, self-reflection, itera-
tion, and other such indicators of the relational frame.

Conclusion

This case shows the different perspective on a national policy that can be
achieved by using Bruce, Edwards, and Lupton's (2007) six frames model.
The Finnish policy has been described as an exemplar, yet analysis of its
official documentation suggests that it focuses properly on only three of
the six frames (content, competency, and—debatably—learning to learn),
with a limited awareness of personal relevance and no mention made of
the social impact or relational frames. A sense of *empowerment* of the stu-
dents is generally missing. All in all, there are grounds to consider this an
instrumentally progressivist document.

United States

Source Document(s)
The Road to 21st Century Learning: A Policymakers' Guide to 21st Century Skills
has no date given on the document, but from the copyright statement on
the website (http://www.p21.org) it must have been published no earlier
than 2004. This was written by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills,
which is a consortium including the U.S. Department of Education, the
American Association of School Librarians, Corporation for Public Broad-
casting, and others, formed in 2002. (It should be pointed out that this
document only just met the criteria for selection, mentioning IL only at
one point, but on reading the document it is clearly in scope.)

Level of Policy
There is some federal support for this, but this is a guidance document,
not policy. The link to the No Child Left Behind act of 2001, however, is
explicit. This is a child-oriented document: K-12 education in U.S. par-
lance. The audience for the *Road to 21st Century Learning* (n.d.), and other
publications from this consortium, is states and school districts, which are
urged to adopt standards set within (see p. 3, bullet 1); but, "States still
have a long way to go in integrating 21st century skills into curriculum and
instruction" (p. 18).

Values Collaboration?
In the *Road to 21st Century Learning* (n.d., p. 3, bullets 4 and 5) states are
urged not just to adopt standards but "provide professional development
that is strategically aligned to support the goal of offering a 21st century
education to all students" and "engage educators, employers, parents and
policymakers in an ongoing dialogue that provides recommendations and
advice about 21st century education." A directive approach is suggested to
CPD, with teachers "need[ing] to understand their roles and responsibili-
ties" (p.20). However, it also mentions the need to develop digital literacy
skills in educational administrators, principals, school board members,
and so on (p. 21).

   Collaboration as an important skill for students is explicitly mentioned,
along with other skills required of "every 8th grader" to "use 21st cen-
tury tools to . . . demonstrate teamwork and leadership and work produc-
tively and collaboratively with others" (*Road to 21st Century Learning*, n.d.,
p. 18).

Frames
   Content Frame. The need for "21st century skills" in information process-
ing is treated as a given throughout, and taken to be self-evident. In Road
to 21st Century Learning (n.d., p. 1), emphasis is immediately placed on
the need to retain economic competitiveness, and address the shortage of
Americans entering technical disciplines. On page 7, this requirement is

expressed in terms of a duty to the students, who must also stay competitive at an individual level.

Competency Frame. Most of the document is cast as a plea to develop and assess competencies in "21st century tools" and related skills.

Learning to Learn Frame. "Students need to learn how to use technology intelligently, creatively and ethically to accomplish intellectual pursuits. To thrive in the world today, students need higher-end skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively beyond their peer groups, analyze complex information from multiple sources, write or present well-reasoned arguments about nuanced issues and develop solutions to interdisciplinary problems that have no one right answer" (*Road to 21st Century Learning*, n.d., p. 5).

Personal Relevance Frame. Multiliteracies are mentioned on page 7 of *Road to 21st Century Learning* (n.d.): "To understand the global geopolitical issues that make headlines requires a deep grounding in history, geography and science, along with new content for the 21st century—global awareness, financial, economic and business literacy, and civic literacy." Information and media literacy are namechecked on page 15 (this is the only explicit reference to IL in the document). No mention is made of the notion that the form of these literacies will vary from context to context.

Social Impact Frame. Is explicitly addressed at various points. For example, "Communities, states and the nation need citizens who are capable of meeting the rights and responsibilities of civic life. For example, citizens may need to understand the scientific, environmental and tax implications of a local or state bond referendum to preserve a national habitat" (*Road to 21st Century Learning*, n.d., 6). A clear example of this (very close to the hypothetical project outlined in Whitworth, 2009, pp. 195–98) is given on page 16.

Relational Frame. No real evidence.

Conclusion

The *21st Century Skills* paper is an interesting document, enlightened in several ways, though it mentions IL by name only once. However, despite a lack of clarity over what is being discussed, with terms like "media literacy" and "technology literacy" either used interchangeably or simply not defined, it does outline a holistic approach to the discipline that has a relatively strong focus on the learning to learn and social impact frames. The need to develop these skills in administrators and principals as well as teachers and students is also recognized, which distinguishes it from many other such policy statements. All that is missing is acknowledgment of the relational frame: developing in students and teachers alike the ability to see the *connections* between the functional competencies (and how they are taught and measured) and the social impact of information and IL, and to reflect on these experiences and thereby learn about issues such as hegemony and colonization.

Australia and New Zealand

Source Document(s)
The Australian and New Zealand Information Literacy Framework (Bundy, 2004).

Level of Policy
Professional body. It specifically says (p. 3) that it is based on the ACRL definitions. The emphasis is on tertiary education.

Values Collaboration?
There is an indirect link to the Mayer (1992) report on student competencies, one of which is "working with others in teams," and the third key principle of IL (p. 11) mentions collective information searching. However, the more detailed standards do not make any attempt to explore this "key principle" in more detail.

Frames
   Content Frame. Standard 1.2 (p. 13) is worth quoting in full as it is a useful general definition of the content frame. It says that the information literate person:

- understands the purpose, scope and appropriateness of a variety of information sources;
- understands how information is organised and disseminated, recognising the context of the topic in the discipline;
- differentiates between, and values, the variety of potential sources of information;
- identifies the intended purpose and audience of potential resources e.g., popular vs scholarly, current vs historical;
- differentiates between primary and secondary sources, recognising how their use and importance vary with each discipline.

   Competency Frame. The ACRL standards have been adopted, though with the addition of the "management of information collected or generated." Standard Two (pp. 14–15) is the competency frame, with Standard Four (pp. 18–19) dealing with information management, in a fairly functional way.
   Learning to Learn Frame. In the introduction (p. 5), it says: "Information literacy is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to engage critically with content and extend their investigations, become more self directed, and assume greater control over their own learning."
   Personal Relevance. "In proposing standards for tertiary education an assumption is made that, at a general level, information literacy involves the same processes across contexts and across content domains. This is an assumption that we might now seek to explore, given that these standards offer a description of what some people conceive to be information literacy.

It is possible that the concept will involve different skills in some settings. Therefore, users of these standards in a novel context, should explore the application of each standard, rather than assume it will be relevant" (p. 1).

Social Impact. The fourth key principle of IL is defined as follows: information literate people "demonstrate social responsibility through a commitment to lifelong learning and community participation" (p. 11). Information production is discussed in standard 5.2, though in a relatively functional way, with an emphasis on choosing the appropriate medium and style rather than concern with content and impact of the communication.

Relational Frame. More than any of the other documents analyzed this policy discusses the relational frame very specifically. Page 1 is worth quoting at length:

> from a holistic perspective . . . each of the graduate attributes can be considered as a reflection of a whole construct called capacity for lifelong learning. In other words, we can view generic constructs either as parts that make up a whole, as is done in either a constructivist or a behaviorist perspective, or as different reflections of the whole lifelong learning construct. If we imagine information literacy as the many sided figure represented by the relational model (Bruce) then, at another level of abstraction, each of the graduate attributes can be considered to be a face of a many sided object that represents lifelong learning capacity. This is one of the considerations that has informed the development of the second edition [of this policy].

Still in the introduction, page 7 refers again to Bruce's work and the need for IL to involve reflection on experience, and page 8 reads: "the iterative and evolutionary nature of searching for and using information should be emphasized. Many aspects are likely to be performed recursively, in that the reflective and evaluative aspects will require returning to an earlier point in the process, revising the information seeking approach, and repeating the steps. The standards are not intended to represent a linear approach to information literacy."

Practical attention to the relational frame is also apparent in the actual standards, 3.3 in particular, which reads "the information literate person . . . reflects on the information seeking process and revises search strategies as necessary" (p. 17).

Conclusion
The policy incorporates all of the six frames, including the relational one. This is perhaps not surprising considering the geographical origin of the six frames model, but nevertheless the holistic nature of IL is firmly accepted in the introduction and then backed up by concrete standards and examples.

However, the document pays very little attention to the importance of collaboration, either between learners or different practitioner groups. This despite the acknowledged need for the information literate person to

"recognize [his/her] own biases and cultural context" (p. 17), something which, by definition, requires an intersubjective approach (cf. Whitworth, 2009b). At best, the need for collaboration is implied in the document, but never made explicit.

Hong Kong

Source Document(s)
The Education and Manpower Bureau (n.d.): Information Literacy Framework for Hong Kong: Building the Capacity of Learning to Learn in the Information Age.

Level of Policy
   Government Body. Since the document was created, the Education and Manpower Bureau has dropped the second term from its title and is now just the Education Bureau (http://www.edb.gov.hk/). These standards are built from a meta-analysis of a range of other published standards, and the methodology by which this was done is outlined (p. 11).

Values Collaboration?
The second sentence in the policy is: "those who can construct knowledge from information sources . . . will, by and large, have the competitive edge to be successful over others at school, work or life" (p. 5). So the first impression given is not that of a collaborative, cooperative learning environment. However, on page 13, the fourth "overarching objective" of the IL framework is "To empower students with greater autonomy and social responsibility over the use of information in their individual as well as collaborative learning," and on page 16, specific reference is made to communal work in the standards. On page 65, at the end of the appendixes, a rubric for collaboration is reproduced; the original source being SCORE (Schools of California Online Resources for Education; n.d.).

Frames
   Content Frame. Little reference is made to the learners' need to understand the relevance of IL and of information to their own lives, but the general importance of engaging with information is firmly made, largely in economic terms; for instance, "Information literacy is often being recognized as essential skills [sic] for workers to survive in a knowledge-based society" (p. 7).
   Competency Frame. Standards in 2.4.1 (C1–C4, pp. 13–14) are clearly within the competency frame. They paraphrase, but broadly reflect, other common standards of competency such as ACRL, ANZIIL, and Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) (as indicated on page 11). Anti-plagiarism is on page 7, specifically valued over "personal relevance": "the information literate person should be expected to act ethically by not plagiarizing another's work. . . ."

Learning to Learn Frame. On page 9: "information literacy can therefore serve as a framework for teachers to frame learning and teaching activities . . . in such a way that students are empowered to engage themselves critically in information processing and inquiry learning, to become more self-directed, and to assume greater autonomy and social responsibility over their own learning." Metacognition is specifically addressed in standards M1–M3 (p. 15).

Personal Relevance. In the introduction, it declares that "[the IL person] should be able to apply their knowledge in real life contexts" (p. 7); although this notion is immediately subordinated to more functional and generalized motivations. However, the standards return to personal relevance and interest, particularly A1, which not only recognizes that the IL individual will "recognize and select materials appropriate to personal abilities and interests" but also notes that pleasure is an important part of IL (pp. 15–16).

Social Impact. The fourth overarching objective mentions "social responsibility over the use of information . . .," (p. 13) and standard S1 says: "An information literate person is able to contribute positively to the learning community in knowledge building" (p. 16). However, there is nothing in the document that refers to the notion of IL supporting an active citizenry and democratic practice.

Relational Frame. On page 15: "An information literate person is able to recognize that the information seeking process is evolutionary and changes during the course of investigation." Standard M2: "An information literate person is able to plan and monitor the process of inquiry . . . able to decompose a complex task/problem into manageable components. . . . reflect on and regulate the process of inquiry. . . ."

Conclusion

The Hong Kong document is the only *state* policy reviewed that approaches a relational, holistic, and critically aware definition of IL. It is also the only one of the six to pay real attention to the affective dimension—that is, the idea of pleasure as being a motivator of information searching, a filter for information, and a support for informational interaction (cf. Whitworth, 2009, pp. 19–20, via Egan, 1990). Its methodology is clearly outlined and its results clearly organized. Its most significant omission is any declared interest in the impact of IL on democracy and active citizenship.

Scotland

Source Document(s)

Scotland (along with England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) is a constituent part of the United Kingdom, which has a partially devolved system of government. At the UK level, the SCONUL (Society of College, National and University Libraries) "seven pillars of information literacy"

model is broadly accepted as appropriate for the higher education arena, and CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals; n.d.) at the workplace and community level (Webber, 2008). However, there is no UK national curriculum for schools, so Scottish policy here has always been separate.

Separate IL declarations for Scotland and Wales have been published. The recent Welsh document (Welsh Information Literacy Project 2010) was considered but rejected for full content analysis due to its being a response to a Welsh Assembly report, discussing how the library sector should be involved in addressing that report's concerns, but not making policy statements in its own right. The Scottish paper (Irving & Crawford, 2008), however, does meet the criteria for full analysis.

Level of Policy
This emerged from the Scottish Information Literacy project, collaboration between universities, further education colleges, schools, and NGOs.[3] Note that the document under review is a draft, to be later "enriched by exemplars of good practice which will demonstrate how specific competencies can be applied in practice and can demonstrate links to higher level complex thinking skills and innovation. Thus trying to avoid the difficulties which other national frameworks in Australia, New Zealand and America have encountered and not just have the skills levels but find hooks to hang on and have these mapped into course design, recognizing different modes of teaching and learning for example evidence based, problem based . . ." (p. 1).

The document tries to address IL at all levels: schools, HE, and lifelong learning. As noted above its basis is in the CILIP definition for workplaces/lifelong learning, and SCONUL for higher education. At school level, two local frameworks were drawn upon: the North Ayrshire Information Literacy Toolkit and the City of Edinburgh EXPLORE Model (see p. 2).

Values Collaboration?
There is no discussion in the introduction of learners using teamwork or collaboration, nor in most of the policy. The word "team" never appears in the document and "collaboration" only in three places. On page 50, in the lifelong learning standards, collaborative publishing tools such as wikis are mentioned as routes for the communication of findings: this is the only mention of collaboration involving the learners. On page 65 a "minimum level of competence" for researchers and academics is mentioned that requires them to be aware of the need to collaborate with librarians in providing access to reading material. The only mention of collaboration in the introduction is on page 11, with educators and library professionals urged to collaborate in constructing IL programs around already-existing materials.

Frames

Content Frame.   No mention is made of economic or social drivers for IL. In the standards, learners at each level are expected to be able to "identify sources" but there is no detail beyond this.

Competency Frame.   This frame is discussed in detail at all the levels, including assessment strategies (pp. 16–17). The standards are presented specifically as competencies.

Learning to Learn Frame.   Page 9 includes this, via a direct quote from the ANZIIL document (Bundy, 2004, p. 6):

> Information literacy education should create opportunities for self directed and independent learning where learners become engaged in using a wide variety of information sources to expand their knowledge, construct knowledge, ask informed questions, and sharpen their critical thinking.

Personal Relevance.   At the bottom of page 10 there is a brief acknowledgment that IL can be discipline-specific and that it is the cumulative effect of these experiences that form the information literate person. No mention is made of multiliteracy. In the actual standards, references to relevance are very general.

Social Impact.   A very brief mention is made in each level of standard of the need for publication and presentation, but nothing more than this.

Relational Frame.   A brief discussion of the need to iterate information searches can be found on pp. 7–8, but there are no further references.

Conclusion

Although each frame could be said to appear in some form, very little in this document goes beyond the competency frame in detail. The references are mostly implicit and address the frames in only very general ways, without specific standards or activities to back them up. The document also makes only minimal reference to collaboration and intersubjectivity. Largely, then, this is a statement of individual competencies and how they can be assessed.

South Africa

Source Document(s)

De Jager and Nassimbeni (2002) covers developments from 1997–2002. De Jager, Nassimbeni, and Underwood (2007) provide a further update, thus meeting the date criterion for selection. While, strictly, both of these papers are reviews rather than policy documents, there is enough presentation of actual standards to meet that criterion also. Nevertheless it is acknowledged that of the six cases this is the least standard-specific discussion, but it is presented as a typical example of where a country has accepted the need for IL yet struggled to do more at a policy level than propose the adoption of generic standards such as—in this case—those of the ACRL.

A more recent discussion appeared in Le Roux (2010), suggesting little has changed. She notes that a review of the OBE (outcomes-based education) curriculum is due in 2010, yet expects little to change in a fundamental way.

Level of Policy

The following point is made in De Jager, Nassimbeni, and Underwood (2007):

> An information literacy workshop for academic librarians in 2004 agreed that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) be asked to accept the ACRL Standards for use in South Africa, with the addition of the final CAUL standard relating to lifelong learning as a 6th standard. This has not transpired yet as there have been delays in setting up the structures to generate standards for the LIS community. SAQA has overall responsibility for quality assurance in support of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is a framework on which standards and qualifications agreed to by the relevant education and training sectors throughout the country are registered. (p. 113)

There is no separate statement of IL policies in SAQA curriculum—just "opportunities to develop" the skills (p. 115). IL is embedded in principles that underpinned the establishment of a National Library (De Jager & Nassimbeni, 2002, pp. 171–72). The 2010 South African Community Library and Information Services Bill (n.d.), clause 5/1, subsection (e), says that library "services must be provided in a manner that facilitate, promote and develop the information literacy and electronic communication and technology skills of library users, particularly people with disabilities and young children" (p. 10), but this is the only mention of IL in the bill and no detail is provided here or elsewhere. Unlike other countries examined, there is little evidence even of professional bodies (Library and Information Association of South Africa [LIASA], in this case) taking the lead; their website's list of policies (n.d.) contains merely guidance on using a listserv and on sponsorship, and nothing about IL (or any other educational activity).

Therefore, though plenty of IL interventions are taking place on the ground, there remains a "lack of convergence" of these various activities into anything resembling coherent state or national policy (De Jager & Nassimbeni, 2002, p. 172).

Values Collaboration?

De Jager, Nassimbeni, and Underwood (2007, p. 112) observe how as early as 1992, an influential report (Breivik, Pitkin, & Tyson, 1992) noted that cooperation between institutions was essential if transformation was to be achieved with limited resources. The INFOLIT project that ensued following this report did bring together institutions in collaborative efforts but, as noted, with little impact on policy. Otherwise, there is little evidence of an interest in collaboration.

Frames

Content Frame. The South African government stance was outlined by De Jager and Nassimbeni (2002, pp. 169–70) and showed a highly instrumental perspective: 1999 and 2000 discussion papers emphasize the benefits of e-commerce and the "benefits for citizens of becoming an information society" (ibid., p. 169). Little specific is discussed about how this translates into a focus on the content frame although the review of practice in De Jager and Nassimbeni (2002, p. 178) suggests that a focus on it was widespread, at least in 2002.

Competency Frame. The focus on the ACRL standards and the promotion of the SAQA as the authority in this area suggests that there is a strong focus on the competency frame.

Learning to Learn Frame. Little specific is mentioned beyond a general implication.

Personal Relevance. Multiliteracies are mentioned in De Jager and Nassimbeni (2002, pp. 180–81), but only insofar as it is rare to see multiliteracies developed in South Africa, and there is no sign this has changed since. (See also Le Roux, 2010, who sets up her project as a response to the lack of media literacy education in her context.)

However, De Jager and Nassimbeni (2002, p. 175) says that the INFO-LIT project:

> increasingly recognized that the skills required for information literacy might not necessarily be generic, but rather "highly dependent on context" and that, as the tools and ways of handling information are in a constant state of change and development (Sayed & De Jager, 1997, p. 9), teaching information skills should be firmly embedded in subject knowledge. It might therefore follow that so-called "generic" courses that are not firmly integrated into the curricula of specific courses might be less appropriate for inculcating information skills of lasting value.

Social Impact. Nothing apparent.
Relational Frame. Nothing apparent.

Conclusion

Though the source documents in this case are not fully satisfactory explorations of policy (though they are excellent reviews of the situation more generally), they show that some fifteen or more years of activity at the institutional level has led to little coherent policy beyond cursory and underdeveloped references to IL in recent bills, and even the professional body in this national context has made no easily accessible public statement on this issue. There is some interest in adopting the ACRL definition despite recognition that the South African context is a distinctive one because of past history, the multilingual nature of the country (Le Roux, 2010) and the uneven nature of economic development.

SUMMARY

Boiling down complex discussions into brief summaries risks over-abstraction. At the same time it will provide a convenient reference point for the concluding discussion to follow. With some reservations therefore, I believe the examples discussed here can be summarized as follows:

Table 2. Summary of Analysis

	Finland	USA	Australia/ NZ	Hong Kong	Scotland	S. Africa
Level of policy	State/ Professional	Broad coalition	Professional body	State	Professional body	No real policy
Collaboration?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Limited
Content frame	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	No	No
Competency frame	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Learning to learn frame	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Personal relevance frame	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Social impact frame	No	Yes	Yes	Limited	No	No
Relational frame	No	No	Yes	Yes	Limited	No

CONCLUSION

Though the author's monolingualism obviously skews the sample toward the Anglophone world, I remind readers that this is not intended to represent a complete investigation of all IL policies worldwide, but is a convenient—effectively, a random—sample. It seeks to test the analytical framework and show how it successfully identifies variation within the sample. The application of this framework to other countries' policies—either after their development or, better still, while they are being compiled—can now be undertaken by others, who, in essential ways, will be more familiar with the local context than the present author.

However, small as the sample is, it does show a considerable variation in the style and scope of national IL policies. The Australasian, American, and Hong Kong documents approach a genuinely holistic perspective on the discipline, though none quite "ticks all the boxes": the U.S. document lacks attention to promoting self-reflection and ongoing review of IL strategies; the Australasian one is weak on collaboration; and the Hong Kong policy does not concern itself with active citizenship. Otherwise, each is comprehensive when compared to the Finnish, Scottish, and South African examples. In the latter case, despite practice on the ground, no national policy has yet begun to coalesce. The other two have reasonably firm support in legislation, but focus largely on functional skills.

It is Bruce, Edwards, and Lupton's argument (2007; also Whitworth, 2009b) that a coherent IL strategy needs to attend to the views of IL in-

herent in *all* the six frames. This is not to value the personal relevance, social impact, and relational frames more highly than the functional frames (content, competency, and, to an extent, learning to learn, which can be interpreted in different ways by different pedagogical traditions, as noted above). To use information in socially responsible ways and to contribute to the maintenance of various communities requires knowledge about the world of information and related competencies. But it has been my argument here, backed by others (e.g., Egan, 1990; Robins & Webster, 1987; Thornton, 2010) that neglect of the personal relevance, social impact, and relational frames, along with an insufficiently collaborative and constructivist approach to the learning to learn frame and the implementation of IL pedagogy more generally, all contribute to instrumental progressivism in the field. The result is likely to be a disempowered student body, perhaps able to act as effective information-processing machines, but without critical awareness of the information passing through them, without flexibility in the face of obstacles, and lacking creativity.

Robins and Webster (1987) and I (Whitworth, 2009a, pp. 128–35) have used Habermas's theories (implicitly in the first case, explicitly in the second) to argue that we should not expect a state policy on ICT skills and IL to appear otherwise. This would be a contradiction in Habermasian terms. However, despite their minor deficiencies, it would be unreasonable to call the Australasian, American, and Hong Kong policies instrumental progressivism; and two of these have had state involvement in, or at least backing for, their development, with the Australasian policy widely accepted in any case. Though analysis is needed of other policies, particularly those that have not yet been translated into English, it appears that instrumental progressivism does not have to be the rule.

Notes
1. See also the updates (IFLA, n.d.).
2. Resources and time to effect translations of non-English documents were lacking, and though friends and colleagues offered to help, without fully professional and official translations, there was a concern that nuances in expression could be lost. See the conclusion for a discussion of the implications of the first criterion, and suggestions for future study in this area.
3. See Glasgow Caledonian University (2009) for the full list.

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